

## National Cultural Policy Submission

1470163

Public

Organisation

Hurrah Hurrah



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

We are Hurrah Hurrah, a collaboration between Alison Bennett and Rose Maher. We are an independent theatre company creating bold, genre-defying performances that blend comedy, stunning visual theatre, and powerful storytelling.

We are small but mighty. Founded in 2014, our dream of becoming a permanent company is quickly fading. Independent artists like us are increasingly faced with this choice: personal financial stability or an arts practise. The lack of sustainability is our biggest concern. We do not believe that those in positions of power fully understand either the significance of art and culture in society, nor the scarcity that artists are experiencing.

Art and culture have always been the playthings of the rich. Right now, it seems like art and culture are exclusive to the rich.

Australia's grant system is in principle, fair and open. In practice, it is exhausting. Application timelines rarely align with actual project development, or with other funding cycles. It is demanded that money be sourced externally — philanthropy, donors and the artists themselves. Impossible if you were born outside of the circles of cultural or financial capital. The emphasis on \,in-kind\, support asks artists to extract free labour from other artists. Quite rightly (albeit contradictorily), every engaged artist must be paid at the correct industry rate. The number of artists engaged is thus limited because grants rarely match the actual cost of a project. Artists consistently reduce the scope of projects to fit grant applications. In the same breath, someone on the phone or at a panel will talk about 'risk taking' or 'big ideas'. It's enough to make us cry. Which we do. Often.

Artists are also forced to frame their work within the strategic priorities of the funding body rather than within the artistic values of themselves as artists. The whole system has put art at the service of administration and not the administration in the service of the art. We'd like to see this change.

As a priority, we would like:

The re-introduction of support into the youth arts sector which creates employment and develops the artists and audiences of the future. For all youth, not just the ones that can afford it.

A significant overall increase in government financial investment in the arts. The evidence that arts investment equals economic upswing is well established. The fact that arts investment keeps getting cut despite its proven economic track record speaks to a more sinister truth.

Significant support for mid-career artists whose resources and experience get used abused.

We would like to see a national policy which makes arts access available to all regardless of economic standing.

A world in which companies such as Hurrah Hurrah can dream big for without being stuck in a constant cycle of grant applications that don't go anywhere or only allow a project to be partially realised.

A Government that doesn't use AI to read the submissions from its Cultural Policy, over simplistically summarising ideas that are nuanced.